

THE BELLEVILLE MESSENGER

November 17

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“WAYS TO AVOID GOSSIP AND SLANDER”

Gossip and slander are a two-way street! You have to have someone willing to talk and someone willing to listen for them to be successful. Gossip and slander are perpetuated because folks give those with “loose lips” their “listening ears.” One who would please God should have nothing to do with such sins. If we are going to avoid gossip and slander ...

Have A Heart Of Humility.

The humble of heart, the one who thinks less of himself than others (Rom. 12:3), puts God first, others second, and himself last. Thus, he will not speak slanderously against God’s creation (Jas. 3:9)! The Bible records the lives of many men and women who are great examples of humility. Therefore, let us follow the examples of such worthies as Christ, Moses, Daniel, Timothy, and others, who humbly served God and guarded their tongues against speaking gossip. When humility is absent, gossip and slander soon follow. The proud person often belittles or “digs up dirt” on others to make himself look better.

Avoid Hatred Of Others.

David said those who hated him were those who gossiped about him (Ps. 41:7). Yes, hatred is a strong motivator for gossip and slander. We need to remember the words of Christ, who told us to love our enemies and pray for them (Matt. 5:44). Have we been doing

this? It is too easy to allow emotions to cloud sound judgment. Don’t do that!

Keep The Words We Speak To A Minimum!

How often have people gotten into trouble for “engaging their mouth before their brain was in gear”? Let us not be hasty to speak. Instead, let us heed the words of Solomon, who said, “Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter any thing before God: for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few.... Suffer not thy mouth to cause thy flesh to sin...” (Ecc. 5:2, 6). How wise were the words of Solomon that remind us to keep our words to a minimum (Prov. 10:19)! May we live the words of David, who said, “Set a watch, O LORD, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips” (Ps. 141:3).

Reserve Our Ears For Listening To The Truth.

Gossip and slander are useless when folks refuse to listen! Let us not give any ground for that. Our minds need to be filled with that which is lovely, pure, truthful, virtuous, praise-worthy, etc. (Phil. 4:8). The sins of gossip and slander are the opposite of that. Let us avoid them!

Remember, if we listen to those who gossip and slander, God will not find us guiltless! We must not waste time listening to this garbage! Just imagine how gossip and slander would be severely diminished if the “listeners” stopped listening!

Conclusion

Gossip and slander are insidious problems we face. Therefore, let us avoid these sins with all we have! As James says, “Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath” (Jas. 1:19). If we are going to please God in word as well as in deed (Col. 3:17), gossip, and slander must never cross our lips! Let us put into practice the rules we have learned so that we will be the kind of people God would have us to be - pure in thought, word, and deed! Be warned: “He that hideth hatred with lying lips, and he that uttereth a slander, is a fool” (Prov. 10:18).

✍ Jarrod M. Jacobs

A Precious Unity

The words of Psalm 133 are very thought-provoking. The psalmist declared, “Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brothers to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious oil upon the head, coming down upon the beard, even Aaron’s beard, coming down upon the edge of his robes. It is like the dew of Hermon coming down upon the mountains of Zion; for there the LORD commanded the blessing—life forever.” In this psalm, the word “precious” means “costly.”

The point of the psalm was a declaration of how good, pleasant, and precious unity is between brethren. It is so precious that those attempting to destroy it are called an “abomination” to God (Prov. 6:16-19). As Christians, we are all brethren in Christ (Eph. 6:10). Our unity is precious, but why? Consider some thoughts about this.

When we have unity with one another, we’ll also connect with God. Jesus prayed to the Father in John 17:20-21, “I am not asking on behalf of these alone, but also for those who believe in Me through their word, that they may all be one; just as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me.” The word “in” in this section means “in connection with.” If we don’t have that unity and are fighting over non-religious matters or against what God has said, then we sever that connection.

When we have unity, our example is shown to the world. The latter part of John 17:20-21 states, “so that the world may believe that you have sent me.” Division and

fighting in the church are the number one way of turning folks away from the truth. A friend of mine told me of one congregation that developed such a prominent reputation for fighting and division within themselves that folks outside heard about it! Try to guess how many souls will be saved with that kind of reputation! Useless fighting in the Lord’s church turns people away and causes unbelief in Jesus.

The unity of God’s people is precious. It’s something we all need to regard as valuable. This is not to deny the importance of standing up for the truth. We’re in serious trouble if we’re not teaching and standing for the truth (2 Jn. 9-11). However, when we fight over silly or useless things, perhaps things that show our immaturity in Christ, we do nothing but worthlessly divide the Lord’s church. This is something Paul heavily condemned (1 Cor. 1:10-13).

Brethren since the Bible calls the unity of brethren “precious,” should we not treat it as such?

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Schedule of Services

Sunday Bible Study	9:30 a.m.
Sunday Morning Worship	10:30 a.m.
Sunday Evening Worship	4:00 p.m.
Wednesday Bible Study	7:00 p.m.